

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00906 171620Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 ACDA-12 /085 W
-----071507 171631Z /53

O R 171455Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6845
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE 337
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0906

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS MILI LE SY
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION REPORT, FEBRUARY 17, 1200 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 0863 (DTG 161200Z FEB 78)

1. SUMMARY: SYRIANS HAVE NOT RESUMED SHELLING, DESPITE REPORTED
THREATS TO DO SO IF PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FURN ASH SHUBBAK
KILLINGS WERE NOT APPREHENDED. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE
NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY ON FEBRUARY 16 CLAIMED THAT SYRIA WAS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 00906 171620Z

PREPARING A LARGE MILITARY OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS.
PRESIDENT SARKIS SIGNED INTO LAW THE BILL PROVIDING FOR A
SPECIAL LEBANESE-ADF SECURITY COURT AND APPOINTED ITS MEMBERS.
SITUATION IN EAST BEIRUT AREA WAS GENERALLY NORMAL, BUT THE AREA'S
SCHOOLS AND THE DAMASCUS ROAD IN FRONT OF FAYYADIYAH BARRACKS
REMAINED CLOSED. END SUMMARY.

2. FURN ASH SHUBBAK AFFAIR.

A. THE MILITARY SITUATION REMAINS RELATIVELY CALM. SYRIANS HAVE NOT RESUMED SHELLING, DESPITE REPORTED THREATS TO DO SO IF PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FURN ASH SHUBBAK KILLINGS WERE NOT APPREHENDED BY 1200 HOURS LOCAL TIME ON FEBRUARY 16. PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKER KAMEL AL-ASSAD TOLD THE PRESS ON FEBRUARY 17 THAT SUSPECTS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED. NO ARRESTS HAVE BEEN MADE, HOWEVER.

B. THE PHALANGIST VOICE OF LEBANON REPORTED ON FEBRUARY 16 THAT CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND PIERRE GEMAYEL HAD MET WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS TO DISCUSS THE FURN ASH SHUBBAK KILLINGS. IN A CONVERSATION AFTERWARDS WITH AN EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEE, GEMAYEL SAID THAT HE HAD TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT THE PHALANGE WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INCIDENT (SEPTTEL).

C. MEANWHILE, THE BODIES OF TWO DEAD SYRIAN SOLDIERS WERE FOUND IN THE BEIRUT SUBURB OF NABA' ON FEBRUARY 16. THIS IS CERTAIN TO AGGRAVATE TENSION RESULTING FROM THE FURN ASH SHUBBAK INCIDENT, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY HAVE BEEN KILLED THREE DAYS BEFORE.

3. ALLEGED SYRIAN OFFENSIVE.

A. ACCORDING TO THE CHRISTIAN DAILY LE REVEIL, CITING REUTERS, THE NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY ON FEBRUARY 16 RELEASED A STATEMENT SAYING THAT SYRIA WAS PREPARING A LARGE MILITARY OFFENSIVE AGAINST

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 00906 171620Z

THE CHRISTIANS (SEPTTEL). THE DECLARATION REPORTEDLY SPECIFIED THAT 18,000 SYRIAN TROOPS AND 220 TANKS HAD BEEN MOVED IN TO ENCIRCLE EAST BEIRUT. DATT RECONNOITERED EAST BEIRUT AREA EVENING OF FEBRUARY 16 AND EMBOFF DID SAME MORNING OF FEBRUARY 17. NEITHER NOTICED UNUSUAL SYRIAN TROOP CONCENTRATIONS. DANY CHAMOUN DENIES THAT PARTY MADE ANY SUCH STATEMENT.

B. TANZIM LEADER GEORGE ADWAN TOLD EMBOFF AT NOON LOCAL TIME ON FEBRUARY 17 THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT 30 SYRIAN TANKS HAD ENTERED LEBANON AT MASSNA THE DAY BEFORE, AND THAT SYRIAN TROOP DISPOSITIONS IN CERTAIN PLACES, SUCH AS HAMKANAH, HAD BEEN STRENGTHENED. ADWAN BELIEVED THESE MOVES MIGHT BE NO MORE THAN "NORMAL" REDEPLOYMENTS. A RELIABLE OBSERVER IN BYBLOS REPORTED ON THE MORNING OF FEBRUARY 16 THAT MOST SYRIAN TROOPS HAD WITHDRAWN FROM THE CITY.

4. SPECIAL SECURITY COURT.

A. PRESIDENT SARKIS SIGNED INTO LAW ON FEBRUARY 15 A BILL PROVIDING FOR A SPECIAL LEBANESE-ADF SECURITY COURT. ON FEBRUARY 16, HE MADE THE FOLLOWING APPOINTMENTS TO THE COURT:

LEBANESE COLONEL JIRYAS QAZZI AS CHAIRMAN;

LEBANESE JUDGE TARABAY RAHMAH AS A MEMBER;
SYRIANS COLONELS ADNAN BADR AL-HASSAN, IZZAT ZAGHAWEET, AND DIB
DAHAR AS MEMBERS;

B. THE PRESIDENT ALSO MADE THE FOLLOWING APPOINTMENTS TO THE
FIVE-MEMBER INVESTIGATIVE COMMISSION:

SYRIAN COLONEL NASIR AD-DIN AS CHAIRMAN;
SYRIAN LIEUTENANT COLONEL MAHAMMAD GHANIM AS A MEMBER;
LEBANESE OFFICERS COLONEL ZAYN MAKKI, COLONEL BUTROS YUNIS, AND
LIEUTENANT COLONEL ADIB AL-ASAD AS MEMBERS.

5. GENERAL SITUATION.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 00906 171620Z

A. ON MORNING TOUR OF BEIRUT ON FEBRUARY 17 EMBOFF OBSERVED THE
FOLLOWING:

TRAFFIC IN FURN ASH SHUBBAK WAS NORMAL AND SHOPS WERE OPEN. NO
SYRIAN SOLDIERS OR ARMED MILITIA WERE IN EVIDENCE.

TRAFFIC REMAINED LIGHT ON THE MAIN ROAD (ASAD AL-ASAD STREET)
SERVING AS A BOUNDARY BETWEEN AYN AR-RUMANNAH AND SHIYAH. SOME
SHOPS ALONG THE MAIN ROAD WERE OPEN, WHEREAS NONE HAD BEEN THE
PREVIOUS DAY. THE TWO AMBUSHED SYRIAN TRUCKS HAD BEEN REMOVED;

THE FAYYADIYAH AREA WAS QUIET, BUT THE MAIN DAMASCUS ROAD IN
FRONT OF THE FAYYADIYAH BARRACKS REMAINED CLOSED.

IN ASHRAFIYAH TRAFFIC WAS NORMAL AND SHOPS WERE OPEN, BUT ALL
SCHOOLS REMAINED CLOSED.

B. MANY LEBANESE ARE SAYING THAT THE REOPENING OF THE SCHOOLS
IN EAST BEIRUT AND THE REOPENING OF THE MAIN DAMASCUS ROAD IN
FRONT OF THE FAYYADIYAH BARRACKS WOULD BE KEY INDICATORS THAT THE
CURRENT CRISIS HAD PASSED.

PARKER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BOMBING, MILITARY EXERCISES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT00906
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780074-0176
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780244/aaaabknh.tel
Line Count: 158
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b36047d5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BEIRUT 863
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3566787
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE SITUATION REPORT, FEBRUARY 17, 1200 HOURS LOCAL
TAGS: PINS, MILI, LE, SY
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b36047d5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014